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NATIONALLY BUDGETED

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GANNETT News Service

WASHINGTON - MANY OF THE NATION'S LEADING EDITORS GOT HOT UNDER THE COLLAR HERE THURSDAY WHEN THEY WERE TOLD THAT THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WAS ENLISTING REPORTERS AS AGENTS. AND THEY REFUSED TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS DONE UNDER A PUBLICLY DECLARED POLICY THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN AWARE OF.

ADM. STANSFIELD TURNER, THE CIA DIRECTOR, TOLD THEM HE'D PUBLICLY CHANGED THE AGENCY'S POLICY, WHICH HAD FORMERLY FORBIDDEN THE PRACTICE THREE YEARS AGO. SINCE THEN, HE SAID, THREE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS HAD AGREED TO COOPERATE, BUT HAD EVENTUALLY NOT BEEN USED.

THE EDITORS WERE DOWNRIGHT SKEPTICAL AT TURNER'S CLAIM THAT HE HAD MADE THE CHANGE IN POLICY PUBLICLY; BUT THE CIA IN FACT SENT NEWSPAPERS A PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT ON DEC. 2, 1977, SETTING FORTH NEW REGULATIONS ON ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH REPORTERS AND EDITORS.

THE NEW REGULATIONS FORBade THE CIA TO USE FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME U.S. JOURNALISTS, PAID OR UNPAID, FOR INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES. NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY WERE TO BE ALLOWED; THEY SAID, "EXCEPT WITH THE SPECIFIC APPROVAL" OF THE CIA DIRECTOR.

IN OTHER WORDS, JOURNALISTS COULD BE SOLICITED FOR CIA INTELLIGENCE WORK IF THE DIRECTOR APPROVED.

BOTH THE WASHINGTON STAR AND THE WASHINGTON POST CARRIED THE STORY, AND STRESSED THAT THE DIRECTOR COULD MAKE EXCEPTIONS.

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER, THE EDITORS' TRADE JOURNAL, DESCRIBED THE NEW CIA RULES ON DEC. 17 OF THAT YEAR. THE SECOND PARAGRAPH BEGAN BY SAYING THAT "'EXCEPT FOR THE PROVISION THAT EXCEPTION CAN BE MADE WITH THE 'SPECIFIC APPROVAL' OF THE CIA DIRECTOR'" THE NEW RULES WERE SIMILAR TO THE OLD POLICIES ADOPTED IN 1976. AND THE THIRD PARAGRAPH BEGAN WITH THE

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AND THE LOS ANGELES TIMES, ONE OF THE NEW RULES BY SEN. GARY HART OF COLORADO WHO CITED "IN PARTICULAR A PROVISION THAT WOULD ALLOW THE DIRECTOR TO MAKE EXCEPTIONS TO A BAN ON THE USE OF JOURNALISTS AS PAID AGENTS."

ONE OF THE CHIEF DOUBTERS OF TURNER'S CLAIM THAT HE HAD GIVEN PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE NEW EXCEPTION WAS R. M. ROSENTHAL, EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES, WHO WAS ATTENDING THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS' CONVENTION WHEN THE DIRECTOR SPOKE.

ROSENTHAL'S SKEPTICISM MIGHT BE TRACED TO HIS READING OF HIS OWN NEWSPAPER. ITS STORY ON DEC. 3, 1977, DESCRIBED A NEW REGULATION "BARRING ANY USE OF AMERICAN REPORTERS...AS ADJUNCTS OF AGENCY INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS."

BUT IT FAILED TO MENTION ANYWHERE THAT TURNER COULD GRANT EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE.

BUT EVEN IF TURNER HAD PUBLICIZED HIS EXCEPTION PROPERLY, THE PROTESTING EDITORS STILL DON'T LIKE IT.

THEY BELIEVE THAT THE CIA'S USE OF REPORTERS AS INFORMANTS CASTS DOUBT ON ALL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS AND LEADS TO SUSPICIONS THAT THEY'RE REALLY SPIES. ANY U.S. REPORTERS CAN CONFIRM THAT THIS IS A WIDELY HELD SUSPICION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

SEN. DANIEL K. INOUYE, D-HAWAII, WHO HAS SPONSORED A BILL TO STOP THE PRACTICE, BELIEVES THAT IT ALSO CAN LEAD TO THE PROBLEM OF PROPAGANDA INSTEAD OF NEWS FLOWING BACK INTO THE U.S. FROM CORRESPONDENTS OVERSEAS.

THE CONCERN OVER CIA-EMPLOYED NEWSHEN CAME TO A HEAD FOUR YEARS AGO WHEN THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE DISCLOSED THAT THE CIA HAD MAINTAINED WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH 50 AMERICAN REPORTERS OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS.

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